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SUBJECT: TAIWAN IDENTIFIES FOUR LOW LEVEL NUCLEAR WASTE
DISPOSAL SITES

REF: A. A. TAIPEI 00999

[B. B. TAIPEI 0719](#)

[C. C. TAIPEI 0686](#)

Classified By: DDIR DAVID J. KEEGAN FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D

[1. C\) SUMMARY.](#) Sandia National Lab experts on nuclear waste disposal are helping Taiwan plan for long-term disposal of low-level radiation waste (LLRW). Taiwan has identified four potential sites for long-term LLRW storage. INER officials are optimistic that by developing a legal framework covering LLRW disposal and an aggressive public relations program they can pave the way for public acceptance of LLRW disposal sites. END SUMMARY

FOUR NEW LOW LEVEL WASTE SITES IDENTIFIED

[2. SBU\)](#) On March 31, Sandia National Labs nuclear waste expert Jow Hong-nian gave a presentation to INER (Institute for Nuclear Energy Research) officials on guidelines for building a LLRW disposal site. Sandia is providing training to INER on how to conduct a "post-closure" safety assessment (assessing the safety of a site long after active control of that site has ceased) and to help Taiwan meet its schedule to begin long-term disposal of LLRW. Taiwan's LLRW's are being stored primarily on site at its nuclear plants with the exception of the disposal site on Orchid Island. While this approach is manageable for the short term, Jow said that in the long term, Taiwan needs to find a suitable waste disposal site for its estimated 1 million drums of LLRW.

[3. C\)](#) Jow mentioned INER is considering four new sites: three in Taitung county along the southeastern coast and one on Penghu Island in the Taiwan Strait. The Penghu site would be a shallow land disposal whereas the three Taitung sites are tunnel-haped and built into hillsides. Taipower, which runs the nuclear power plants, has contracted with Chungshin, an engineering consulting firm, to do a preliminary site feasibility study on all four sites. INER will then be expected to do a complete performance assessment on the results of the study. Jow also pointed out that under the current guidelines, Taiwan classifies nuclear waste only into high and low radiation wastes, but a more comprehensive waste classification

system was needed, such as the four-category system used in the U.S.

TAIWAN'S WASTE DISPOSAL REGULATIONS NEED LEGAL BACKING

¶4. C) INER consultant Dr. Jia Yee-ping told AIT that INER has abandoned previous plans to re-locate LLRW's because of interference by local politicians who have used the issue for political purposes. He said that Taiwan had learned from past mistakes, such as trying to dispose of waste in foreign countries (DPRK and Cambodia). Jia said LLRW disposal remains a controversial issue in Taiwan and the not-in-my-back-yard (NIMBY) mindset is very strong. Consequently, INER believes Taiwan needs to develop a legal framework that will not be subject to political whims to find a long term solution to the nuclear waste disposal problem.

MORE PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORTS NEEDED

¶5. SBU) INER officials believe that Taiwan needs to educate the public about the safety of nuclear power in order to overcome the political interference and public protests that have derailed past attempts to build a permanent nuclear waste disposal site. INER officials said that the selection and evaluation process of a disposal site needs to be transparent, as in Japan, where a LLRW disposal site has been transformed into an environmentally friendly place that attracts visitors.

YOUNG